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RAFIDAH-PROMOTE

TRADE AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION WILL BE MORE AGGRESSIVE, SAYS RAFIDAH

KUALA LUMPUR, March 1 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will implement a more aggressive trade and investment missions this year, Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said here today.

She said that she will lead the missions to countries which would include Europe, the Middle East and the US.

Rafidah also said that old export markets needed to be expanded and sustained, and new ones explored.

She was speaking to reporters after attending a prize giving ceremony of the 15th Integrated Circuit Technology Project competition organised by Universiti Malaya-ChipPac Intersil, here today.

"For example, in Europe this time I will be going to Sweden, and subsequently with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Russia, Germany and Poland," she said.

Meanwhile, she said that Lebanon would be one of the places where an exhibition on Malaysian products would be held.

"What is important is not only to attract investments, but also to market our products and services. This time, the missions would do both more aggressively," she said.

Asked about the US export market, Rafidah said that:"America is one of the important export destinations, apart from Europe, Asean and Japan. So, we cannot ignore the country (America).

She said that America, which contributed one-fifth of Malaysia's exports, has a large market which has not been fully tapped.

"We have a bright prospect there," she added.

China, meanwhile, which is a new open market, has enormous export potential for Malaysia, she said.

"Last year, among all the countries worldwide, the increase in the exports to China was most impressive," Rafidah added.

Rafidah said that apart from palm oil, goods and services have vast potential for exports to China.

She also said that since China will host the 2008 Olympics, "we are making efforts to have Malaysian service providers participate in the infrastructure building in China."

Meanwhile, she said that with the improved global economic condition, especially in the US and Europe, the country's external and domestic demand would increase.

This would in turn contribute to a positive and higher gross domestic product (GDP) growth this year, she said.

On Wednesday, Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) announced that last year's GDP growth expanded 0.4 percent. -- BERNAMA

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